

**WILLIAMSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SESSION #21
Monday, December 13, 2004**

A work session of the Williamsburg Planning Commission was held on Monday, December 13, 2004, at 6:30 p.m., in Multi-Purpose Room #2, Quarterpath Recreation Center, 202 Quarterpath Road.

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Present were Commissioners Young, Hertzler, McBeth and Rose. Absent were Commissioners Pons, Friend and Smith. Also present were Planning Director Nester and Zoning Administrator Murphy.

Mr. Young called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

OPEN FORUM

No one spoke in the open forum.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Nester reviewed Residential Issues with the Commission.

Residential areas **not** needing land use designation changes were reviewed, as follows: College Terrace, West Williamsburg Heights, Casey Field, Matoaka Court, West Williamsburg, Jamestown Road, Rolfe Road, Burns Lane area, Indian Springs, Griffin Avenue/Pollard Park/Chandler Court area, Braxton Court and Crispus Attucks. There was a short discussion about the Casey Field, and the Commission agreed that no changes were needed for these areas.

Mr. Nester reviewed the Center City area, and said that the residential component of the Center City area is an important part of the City's character. He said that a major determining factor is the density that is allowed, and that the idea of a true mixed use downtown area is very important, and should be advanced both through the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Nester said that the densities now allowed in the Center City area range from 8 to 14 units per net acre, with the majority of the area at 8. This is more of a suburban density than an urban density, and the Center City area should be seen as Williamsburg's downtown urban core. Mr. Nester noted that earlier Plans proposed higher densities, with the 1953 Plan proposing 18 to 22 units/acre. Mr. Nester concluded by saying that a higher residential density is appropriate for the Center City area today, and will help to make downtown Williamsburg a more vibrant and viable area for both living and shopping. A 22 unit/acre density would theoretically allow 231 new dwelling units, but practically speaking a figure of 150 units is

more realistic. He said that the next step was to review six individual areas in the Center City area.

Merchants Square/Delly Area/Triangle Block

Mr. Nester suggested increasing the residential density to 22 units/net acre, which would allow a potential for 20 new dwelling units, compared with 12 units under the existing 14 unit/net acre density. The following comments were made by Commissioners:

- Can this area handle the additional traffic generated by more dwelling units
- Where will new residents get basic necessities
- Possibility for allowing overnight parking for residential uses in the Prince George Parking Garage
- How does this relate to the overall goal for commercial uses
- Is 22 units/acre a reasonable figure

Mr. Nester said that he felt that 22 units/net acre was a reasonable figure, and has been historically supported by earlier Plans. He said that the additional traffic should be adequately handled by the existing street system. More residents in the Center City area could increase the likelihood of stores providing basic necessities, but it would be determined by the market.

It was a consensus of the Commission that 22 units/net acre was a reasonable figure for the Merchants Square, Delly area, and Triangle Block section of the Center City.

City Square Area

Mr. Nester noted that the City Square area is now planned and zoned for 8 units/net acre, and suggested changing that to 22 units/net acre, with a maximum of 10 units on an individual lot, which would allow a reasonable number of units on second and third floors, while discouraging large apartment complexes. This density would have a theoretical potential for 44 new dwelling units, but practically it would be less. This area was discussed by the Commission at length, and the following comments were made by Commissioners:

- The opportunity to get more residential uses in this area makes sense
- The City Square block is very accessible
- How do we control the quality of what is built
- Requiring a special use permit for increased density could be a disincentive
- This area is more prime for residential than for commercial use
- The limitation of 10 units on an individual lot will help to preserve the character of the area

Mr. Nester said that the 22 units/net acre would relate well with the adjacent Downtown Commercial area, and that this density is needed to encourage the provision of more housing in the downtown area. He said that if no change in density were made, it will be unlikely for more residential units to be built. Mr. Nester concluded by saying that this area

should be encouraged to be mixed-use, and that more residential is essential to advance this concept.

It was the consensus of the Commission that 22 units/net acre was a reasonable figure for the City Square area.

Commissioner Rose left the meeting.

North Henry Street (east side) and Scotland Street

Mr. Nester said that this area is now designated Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential, and zoned RDT for up to 8 units/net acre. He suggested that this area could be changed to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. This would allow a theoretical potential for up to 20 new dwelling units, compared to four under the existing zoning. Mr. Nester noted that Mr. Friend has earlier expressed concerns about a higher density for this area.

South Boundary Street/South Henry Street area (north and south of Newport Avenue)

Mr. Nester said this area is now a combination of Low Density Single Family Residential, Office and Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential, and is zoned a combination of RM-1, RM-2, and LB-3. Mr. Nester suggested changing the RM-1 and RM-2 areas to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/net acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. He also suggested increasing the density of the LB-3 area (designated Office land use) to match. This would allow a theoretical potential for up to approximately 60 new dwelling units, compared with 25 allowed under the present zoning (the practical yield would be less).

South Henry Street (west side from Boundary to Mimosa)

Mr. Nester said this area is designated Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential and zoned RM-1 (8 units/net acre). He suggested that it be changed to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/net acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. Mr. Nester explained that if the area from 624 South Henry (house recently demolished) to South Boundary Street was completely redeveloped, there would be a potential for approximately 45 new units at this density, compared with 16 units allowed under the existing zoning.

Since the suggestion for these three areas by Mr. Nester was for the same density, they were discussed as a group by the Commission. The Commissioners made the following comments:

- This existing density along South Henry Street would most likely result in single family development, instead of multifamily.
- The base density on Boundary Street north of Newport Avenue would be reduced from the existing 14 units/net acre, but it would be offset by the ability to increase to 22 units/acre with a special use permit.

- The character of area #3 (North Henry/Scotland) is a little different from areas #5 and #6.
- Requiring a special use permit to go above the base density of 8 units/net acre is a good idea.

Since there were only three members participating in this discussion, it was decided to delay reaching a final consensus. However, the consensus of the three members present was that a base density of 8 units/net acre, with the ability to increase to 22 units/net acre with a special use permit, was reasonable. This issue will be placed on the next work session agenda for discussion.

Blayton Building (WRHA)

Mr. Nester said that this lot is now designated High Density Multifamily Residential, but zoned RDT (8 units/net acre). He suggested that it be changed to Downtown Commercial land use, which increases the density to 22 units/net acre. This could allow the option of construction of additional elderly housing on this close-in lot, either separately or in conjunction with other uses. This change would allow 42 new dwelling units in addition to the existing 38 units. Mr. Nester said that there would have to be a provision to allow Assisted Housing for the Elderly as a special use permit without the 10 units/lot limitation for the rest of the Downtown Commercial area.

It was the consensus of the Commission that 22 units/net acre was a reasonable figure for this lot.

Room Rental to Visitors (B&B)

Mr. Nester presented the following options: (a) current regulations are acceptable – designated corridors, quotas, four bedroom maximum; (b) more flexibility - designated corridors, quotas, allow more than four bedrooms based on criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods; (c) still more flexibility - designated corridors, eliminate quotas, leave room rental limitation at four bedrooms; (d) maximum flexibility - designated corridors, eliminate quotas, allow more than four bedrooms to be rented based on criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods; (e) flexibility for larger lots - allow larger lots to apply for a special use permit for additional rooms, with criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods as well as a limited number of larger establishments. Commissioners made the following comments:

- The viability of the establishments is important – some larger houses could adequately handle more bedrooms.
- Option 5 is really a part of options b-d, and should be eliminated.
- Quality of existing uses could be compromised if the quotas were eliminated.
- The quota on Richmond Road could be reviewed and possibly increased, since this is the only corridor that is at the quota.

Mr. Nester noted that the Comprehensive Plan will state broad policy issues about B&Bs, with the details to be worked out when the zoning revisions are drafted. He asked if it should be a policy to be sure that B&Bs could be converted back to a single family

Williamsburg Planning Commission Minutes
Comprehensive Plan Work Session #21
December 13, 2004

residential use without too much trouble (as opposed to much difficulty if more units were allowed in the dwelling or in an accessory dwelling.

Bob Tubbs, Cedars B&B, 616 Jamestown Road, acknowledged that option "b" represented the consensus of the B&B owners. He said they are divided on the issue of maintaining quotas, and said that there are only a handful of establishments that have a capacity to expand. He said that the majority of the owners agree that owner-occupancy should be required.

It was decided that since only three members were present, reaching a consensus should wait until the next work session.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jesse Young, Chairman
Williamsburg Planning Commission